

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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HQ 3AF RAF MILDENHALL

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 13482

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UK MPOL MILI NATO
SUBJECT: RAF FAIRFORD

REQ: HQ SAC OFFUTT AFB DTG 100100Z AUG AND 092230Z AUG

1. PERRY, HEAD OF DS-8, MOD, HAS CONFIRMED MOD'S
DESIRE THAT THE PROPOSED KC-135 FLYING EXERCISE AT
FAIRFORD TAKE PLACE BETWEEN 12-28 SEPTEMBER. HE
STRESSED THE SUITABILITY OF THE TIME-FRAME FOR THE
EXERCISE NOTING THAT SENIOR OFFICIALS BELIEVE THE
GOVERNMENT'S CASE TO JUSTIFY THE FAIRFORD DECISION
WILL BE HELPED BY THE PLANNED EXERCISE OF RAF FAIRFORD.

2. PERRY SAID THE 21 SEPTEMBER PUBLIC MEETING HAS NO
STATUTORY OR FORMAL STATUS; IT BEING HELD TO ALLOW
OPPONENTS TO "LET OFF STEAM," AND TO PROVIDE THE
AUTHORITIES WITH A PLATFORM FOR INFORMING THE LOCAL
COMMUNITY ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THE DEPLOYMENT. BRITISH
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ARE CONVINCED THAT THE EXERCISE OF FAIRFORD WILL DO
MORE TO HELP THE CASE FOR TANKER DEPLOYMENT THAN TO ARM
THE OPPONENTS. THE COUNCILL WILL MEET "FORMALLY" ABOUT
28 SEPTEMBER TO PREPARE ITS SUBMISSION--WHICH WILL
HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED DURING THE
PUBLIC MEETING.

3. MOD EXPECTS THE COUNCIL'S ENDORSEMENT OF THE FAIRFORD DECISION DURING THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF OCTOBER. UNLESS A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF TROUBLE EMERGES FROM THE 21 SEPTEMBER PUBLIC HEARING--WHICH OFFICIALS DO NOT NOW ANTICIPATE--MOD EXPECTS TO BE ABLE TO NOTIFY USAF WITHIN A MATTER OF DAYS AFTER RECEIVING THE COUNCIL'S SUBMISSION THAT WE MAY PROCEED WITH WORK TO READY FAIRFORD FOR THE TANKERS. HOWEVER, IF THERE IS TROUBLE AT THE PUBLIC HEARING, THEN MOD BELIEVES THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY WAIT AWHILE BEFORE GIVING A GO-AHEAD. SUCH A DELAY COULD LAST FOR TWO OR THREE WEEKS.

4. PERRY SAID HIS OFFICE WILL WANT TO MEET WITH SAC AND 3 AF OFFICIALS BEFORE THE START OF THE EXERCISE TO DISCUSS LIKELY PROBLEMS. HE UNDERLINED ALSO THE IMPORTANCE HMG ATTACHES TO GETTING A GOOD PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRESENTATION ON THE EXERCISE. HE SAID MOD WANTS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH SAC/3AF PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF AND MOD STANDS READY TO ADVISE AND ASSIST.

STREATOR

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